

Rare and Vagrant Birds in the Falkland Islands 2004

Andy Black, Mike Morrison and Robin Woods

This report summarises the sightings of rare and vagrant birds submitted to Falklands Conservation or made by the authors and staff of Falklands Conservation during 2004.

Great grebe *Podiceps major*

Over recent years, great grebes have been regularly sighted. There were three records during 2004; two birds were reported on 24th January on Long Pond, Bull Point (E. Jaffray), on 22nd February a single great grebe was reported on the estuary north of River View Farm (N. Rowlands) and on 26th February a visitor to Pebble Island sighted one (reported by A. White).

Adelie penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae*

Adelie penguins have rarely been recorded within the Falklands (Woods 1988). This year there were two sightings, possibly of the same bird, during February. The first was reported by A. Strongroom at Bertha's Beach on the 14th with the other sighted by E. Goss a short distance up the coast at Bluff Cove on the 29th.

Erect Crested Penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*

The bird first sighted on Pebble Island in 1997 and every year since was re-sighted throughout the summer of 2004 (first seen on 7 November, A. White).

Sooty albatross *Phoebastria fusca*

There were two records of sooty albatross within the Falklands conservation zones. On 14th March, two were observed approximately 150 miles north-east of Stanley (T. Reid) and on 13th April one was recorded approximately 120 miles to the east of Stanley (A. Black). These records add to several others over recent years seen during the autumn.

White-headed petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*

A single white-headed petrel was sighted approximately 150 miles to the east of Stanley on 13th April (A. Black).

Westland petrel *Procellaria westlandica*

A single westland petrel was encountered in the south-west of the Falklands conservation zone on 16th February (T. Reid). This is the first record of this species within Falkland Islands waters.

Spectacled petrel *P. conspicillata*

A single spectacled petrel was recorded to the north of the Jason Islands on 14th February (T. Reid). This is the third record for the Falkland Islands.

Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

A single Manx shearwater was sighted approximately 60 miles to the south of Sea Lion Island on 25th February (T. Reid).

Cocoi heron *Ardea cocoi*

Over recent years, cocoi herons have been recorded annually in small numbers. Another four were seen in 2004. H. Miller reported the first on 3rd May at the western end of Stanley harbour; the second was reported by A. Black on 7th August while participating in a rat eradication programme on North West Island. On 16th October a single bird seen near Lagoon Bluff Cove (N. Rowlands and K. Kilmartin) was probably of this species. S. & M. Morrison and Adam Henry encountered a single bird at Salvador jetty on the 4th December.

Great white egret *Egretta alba*

A single great white egret was sighted by E. Jaffray at Cattle Point, North Arm, on the 17th August.

Black-faced ibis *Theristicus melanopus*

Black-faced ibis have been one of the more regularly recorded vagrant species over recent years (see previous annual reports). In 2004, one was reported in the paddocks to the west of Stanley (G. Clement). This bird was seen daily until 2nd June (A. Henry). A second bird was reported at Stephens Peak, Port Stephens, on 11th November (D. Towersey) and one was sighted near Walker Creek settlement (S. Harvey).



Black-faced ibis,
Stanley, May 2005.
Alan Henry.

Roseate spoonbill *Ajaja ajaja*

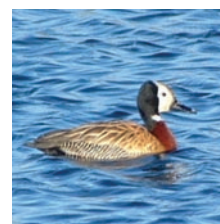
Following the unprecedented number of roseate spoonbill sightings during 2003, up to seven more were reported during 2004. M. & S. Morrison reported one on the Darwin road near Laguna Ronde on 1st May, F. Rozee recorded one at Spring Point on 1st June with another at Port Edgar in late June and on the same day M. and D. Minnell report one at Mossie Farm. Additionally, several freshly dead roseate spoonbills were found; on New Island in May (K. and T. Chater), Sea Lion Island on 1st July (E. Philip) and one on Pebble Island on 16th July (Arina Berntsen).

Chilean flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis*

On 23rd May, a single Chilean flamingo was reported on Stanley rugby pitch (Z. Stephenson).

White-faced whistling duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

On 17th April, S. Hardcastle and A. McLeod encountered a group of six white-faced whistling ducks in the ditch that runs out of the Goose Green reservoir. This was the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands. Over the following days, five were sighted in Darwin Horse Park (B. and D. Aldridge). On 7th June, a single bird was sighted on the reservoir at Goose Green and was seen by many observers over the following weeks. On 16th November,



White-faced
whistling duck,
Goose Green,
in June 2005.
M Morrison.

while conducting gentoo penguin counts, N. Huin recorded a single bird at Motley Point pond. These later sightings might well be of birds from the original group of six.

Ashy-headed goose *Chloephaga poliocephala*

On 24th January, C. Jeffs and L. Lock reported a single bird at Concordia Beach. On 3rd November, a single bird was sighted at the dairy, Becks Farm, with two birds present on the 9th (N. Davis). In mid November, M. Rendell reported a possible pair of ashy-headed geese on Bleaker Island.

White-cheeked pintail *Anas bahamensis*

On 1st January, two white-cheeked pintails, possibly a pair, were seen on a small pond at the back Elephant Beach, Smylies farm, (A. Henry), and they were still present on 25th January (S. & M. Morrison). This species is a very rare vagrant to the Falklands with the only other documented record coming from before 1860 (Woods 1988). However, another specimen, collected before 1842 was discovered in the Liverpool Museum in 2003 (R. Woods).



White-cheeked pintail. Alan Henry.

Cinnamon teal *Anas cyanoptera*

A male in eclipse plumage was sighted on 3rd January at Green Pond, Pond's Flat, Newhouse, and was seen several times until 31st October (S. & M. Morrison) this is most probably the same bird reported in last year's review. Single males were observed on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February (C. Jeffs and L. Lock), on the small pond at the back of Elephant Beach, Smylies Farm, on 4th October (A. Henry), on Sand Pond, Cattle Point, on 21st November (S. & M. Morrison) and in Turners Stream, near Chatta Creek, on 28th December (S. & M. Morrison and B. & G. Henry).

Red shoveler *A. platalea*

A pair of red shoveler were on Concordia Pond, Salvador, on 22nd January (C. Jeffs and L. Lock). Six birds (three males and three females) were still on a pond at Cattle Point on the 1st February, first seen there on the 13th December 2003 (S. & M. Morrison). Several records came from Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February two pairs were present (C. Jeffs and L. Lock) by 22nd February only a single male remained (P. Berntsen) and three males were seen on 5th March (S. & M. Morrison). Four birds 3 males and 1 female on Green Pond, Pebble Island, on 24th- 26th February a 'pair' were still present on 7th November (A. White). In late November, about 20 were seen on one of the Pebble Island ponds (W Rendell).

Rosy-billed pochard *Netta peposaca*

A single male rosy-billed pochard was still on Surf Bay pond on 2nd January (S. & M. Morrison) having first been seen in early December last year. Single males were seen at several

locations; Green Pond, Pond's Flat, Newhouse, on 3rd January (S. & M. Morrison), Lion Creek ponds between the 7th and 31st January (S. & M. Morrison) and on Picasso Pond, Evelyn Station, on 11th January (A. Henry). This bird was first seen in this location in early December 2003 and was resighted on the 3rd October up until the 14th November this year (S. & M. Morrison). Additionally, a pair was observed on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February (C. Jeffs and L. Lock).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

A single bird was watched in flight over Mount Byng, Carcass Island on 4th December (W. Rendell).

Red-gartered coot *Fulica armillata*

An immature red-gartered coot was reported at the west end of Stanley Harbour on 3rd May (N. Huin). This bird relocated to Cape Pembroke on the 9th May (M. & S. Morrison, A. Henry). On 7th November, A. White reported a red-gartered coot on Pebble Island.



Red-gartered coot, Cape Pembroke. Alan Henry.

White-winged coot *Fulica leucoptera*

Following numerous records over recent years, there were several records of white-winged coots during 2004. On 23rd January, one was sighted on Hawk's Nest Pond (A. Douse), three birds were on the pond near Elephant Point, Saunders Island, on 27th September (A. Douse), a single bird was seen on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 14th November (S. & M. Morrison). However, of greater interest were up to four birds on Big Pond, Bleaker Island from May onwards (W. Rendell). Two of these birds paired and nested on Big Pond and hatched three chicks on the 25th January 2005. Unfortunately the chicks were gone by the 4th February it is likely that they perished in the severe gale on the 2nd (pers. comm. M. Rendell). This is the first record of this species breeding on the Falklands.

Southern lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*

On 11th August, K. Thorsen reported a southern lapwing at Teal Inlet settlement.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Only one recorded this year, of a single bird near Cape Pembroke Lighthouse on 8th November (W. Rendell).

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*

Forty seven Hudsonian godwits were present at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, on 22nd February. Seven birds were present in the same location on the 18th April one in summer plumage (S. & M. Morrison). Four other records came from around the islands; one at York Bay Pond 31st October (J. Cole), four at Volunteers on 21st November (S. Halford), four on Sea Lion Island at the end of November (V. Cappello) and nine

birds at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, on 12th December (S. & M. Morrison and A. & B. Henry).

Lesser yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

A single bird was reported by E. Jaffray on the small pond on the east side of Bull Point 24th January and two birds were in the area of Long Pond, Cape Pembroke, on the 24th October (T. Reid).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A. Douse reported a single bird at the south end of Bertha's Beach on 31st December.



Pectoral sandpiper, West Stanley. M Morrison.

Pectoral sandpiper *C. melanotos*

The bird at Green Pond, Newhouse, first reported in last year's review was still present on 3rd January (S. & M. Morrison). On 22nd January, a single bird was reported at Concordia Pond, Salvador (C. Jeffs and L. Lock). On 9th June, a pectoral sandpiper was seen in a paddock to the west of Stanley (S. Morrison). Two birds first sighted on a small pond Fox Point, Fitzroy,

on 18th December (M. Morrison and A. Douse) were still present on the 27th December (S. & M. Morrison).

Stilt sandpiper *C. himantopus*

A single bird was present on the small pond at Fox Point, Fitzroy, on 12th December (A. & B. Henry and S. & M. Morrison).



Stilt Sandpiper, Fox Point. M Morrison.

Wilson's phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Two Wilson's phalaropes were present on Concordia Pond, Salvador, on 22nd January (C. Jeffs and L. Lock).

Least Seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*

On 23rd May, a female least seed snipe was found at Bertha's Beach (C. Mulligan).

Band-winged nightjar *Caprimulgus longirostris*

A freshly dead band-winged nightjar was found near the shearing shed at Albemarle on the 22nd April (E. Berntsen) and brought into Falklands Conservation by her father, Leon, the next day. White spots on the tail indicate the bird was a male. This is the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands.



Band-winged nightjar. Alan Henry.

Southern martin *Progne modesta*

A single southern martin was seen at Volunteer House on 10th October (R. Tuckwood).

Purple martin *P. subis*

Two immature birds seen by M. Peake in the evening of 8th October at his property on James Street, both birds were looking tired roosting on a wire (A. Henry, S. & M. Morrison). This is the first confirmed record of this species in the Falkland Islands.

Bank swallow *Riparia riparia*

Five bank swallows were observed at the Totem Pole, Airport Road, on 9th October, along with an adult Barn Swallow (A. Douse) and two birds were present at Bleaker Island on 26th November.

Patagonian sierra-finch *Phrygilus patagonicus*

An unprecedented number of Patagonian sierra-finches were reported during 2004. The first, which constituted the first confirmed record for the Falkland Islands, was of a single male at Gypsy Cove. This bird was first seen on the 23rd May (S. Harvey) and was seen in the same area up until the 29th September (many observers). In addition, a male was at Fitzroy settlement on the 9th June (I. McLeod), another male at New Island first seen on 20th May was seen present up until mid August (T. & K. Chater), one was resident on Bleaker Island from the end of April until September (P. Rendell), a single bird was sighted on Weddell Island in mid July (S. Harvey) and finally a Patagonian sierra-finch was reported on Sea Lion Island on 9th October (S. Harvey).



Patagonian sierra-finch. Alan Henry.

Shiny cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

On 1st October, V. Clarke reported that a shiny cowbird had been in the Elephant Beach area for about a week or so. M. Morrison, A. Henry and A. Douse confirmed the bird's identity as a male shiny cowbird on the 2nd October. This is the second record of this species in the Falklands.

References

Woods, R.W. (1988) *Guide to Birds of the Falkland Islands*. Anthony Nelson Ltd, Oswestry, England.